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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	ACDE-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	OASY-00
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	SP-00	SS-00	STR-01	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PRME-01	DRL-09
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R 242355Z MAY 95
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7922

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DEPT FOR OLLIE P. ANDERSON (ARA/PPCP)
DEPT FOR ALDEN H. IRONS - DRL

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
☒ Release () Excise () Deny ☒ Declassify
Date 2/27/02 Exemption

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

TAGS: PHUM, HO

SUBJECT: CONNOLLY/CARNEY FAMILY VISIT WITH AMBASSADOR
CONCERNING DISAPPEARANCE OF FATHER JAMES FRANCIS CARNEY IN
1983

1. SUMMARY: JOSEPH CONNOLLY, EILEEN CARNEY CONNOLLY AND
JOHN PATRICK CARNEY PAID A CALL ON THE AMBASSADOR MAY 15
TO SEEK THE EMBASSY'S ASSISTANCE IN AN INVESTIGATION INTO
THE DEATH OF FATHER JAMES FRANCIS CARNEY (THEIR
BROTHER/BROTHER IN LAW) WHO WAS REPORTED KILLED IN
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SOME TWO HOURS WITH THE FAMILY GIVING THEM AN IN-DEPTH
ACCOUNT OF FATHER CARNEY'S DEATH AS IT WAS REPORTED BY
EMBASSY/DAO ACCOUNTS OF WHAT WAS REPORTED TO THEM AT THE
TIME, I.E., THAT FATHER CARNEY MAY HAVE STARVED TO DEATH
AFTER BEING ABANDONED IN THE JUNGLE BY HIS HONDURAN
COMPANIONS.

2. THE FAMILY CONTINUED TO INSIST, HOWEVER, THAT FATHER
CARNY WAS CAPTURED AND EXECUTED BY THE HONDURAN MILITARY,

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WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CIA. RONALD GLASS OF USAID, WHO BY CHANCE WAS THE ASSISTANT ARMY ATTACHE AT THE EMBASSY HERE IN THE MID 1980'S, MET WITH THE FAMILY AND CONVEYED THE SAME VERSION OF FATHER CARNEY'S DEATH AS GIVEN BY THE AMBASSADOR. AFTER EXPRESSING THEIR GRATITUDE TO RON GLASS, THEY STATED THAT CONDITIONS IN HONDURAS HAD CHANGED A GREAT DEAL AND THEY NOW BELIEVE THEY COULD CONDUCT THEIR INVESTIGATION WITHOUT HINDRANCE AND FEAR FROM THE MILITARY. THEY ALSO STATED THAT THE AMBASSADOR AND THE EMBASSY WERE BEING VERY HELPFUL AND WERE SATISFIED THEY COULD DEPEND ON US FOR ASSISTANCE. THEY LEFT HONDURAS MAY 16 BOUND FOR ENGLAND. END SUMMARY.

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3. ON MAY 15, DRS. W. JOSEPH AND EILEEN CONNOLLY (BROTHER IN LAW AND SISTER OF FATHER CARNEY) AND JOHN PATRICK CARNEY (BROTHER) VISITED THE AMBASSADOR TO INTRODUCE THEMSELVES AND DISCUSS THEIR INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF FATHER JAMES FRANCIS CARNEY, A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST, WHO WAS REPORTED KILLED IN HONDURAS AROUND SEPTEMBER 14-16, 1983. THE FAMILY ASKED THE AMBASSADOR FOR THE FULL, PRACTICAL SUPPORT OF THE EMBASSY BY REQUESTING THAT WE REVIEW OUR FILES AND ASK THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT AND

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MILITARY TO COME FORTH WITH DATA RELEVANT TO THIS CASE. THEY EXPRESSED A DEEP DESIRE TO CLOSE THIS MATTER BY LEARNING THE TRUE CIRCUMSTANCES OF FATHER CARNEY'S DEATH AND, IF POSSIBLE TO LOCATE HIS BODY AND RETURN IT THE UNITED STATES.

4. PRIOR TO MEETING WITH THE FAMILY, THE AMBASSADOR WAS BRIEFED ON THE CASE OF FATHER JAMES FRANCIS CARNEY (WHO CALLED HIMSELF PADRE GUADALUPE IN HONDURAS) BY RONALD GLASS WHO WAS THE ASSISTANT ARMY ATTACHE DURING THE TIME OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FATHER CARNEY IN 1983 AND WHO INVESTIGATED THE INCIDENT AT THAT TIME.. GLASS IS NOW A RETIRED ARMY OFFICER WHO HAS WORKED AS A PROJECT OFFICER AT USAID FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS. RON GLASS WAS TOLD THAT FATHER CARNEY JOINED A GROUP OF 96 HONDURANS WHO HAD BEEN TRAINED IN CUBA AND RETURNED TO HONDURAS WITH THE MISSION OF ORGANIZING AN INSURGENCY SUPPORT NETWORK AND TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT. IN BRIEF, THE GROUP IN JULY 1983 WAS ON A NINE DAY FORCED MARCH TO REACH THEIR BASE CAMP ON A MOUNTAIN IN THE OLANCHO REGION OF HONDURAS. IT WAS A GRUELING MARCH AND TOOK A HEAVY TOLL ON THE HEALTH OF FATHER CARNEY. MOST OF THEIR FOOD SUPPLIES HAD RUN OUT BY THE TIME THEY REACHED THE CAMP.

5. THE GROUP'S PRESENCE WAS BETRAYED ON AUGUST 1 BY TWO OF ITS MEMBERS WHO DESERTED UPON CROSSING INTO HONDURAS.

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THE INFORMATION THEY VOLUNTARILY PROVIDED ALERTED THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS AND PROVIDED WHAT THEY NEEDED TO FIND AND ENGAGE THE INSURGENTS. THE PRTC (CENTRAL AMERICAN WORKERS' REVOLUTIONARY PARTY) GUERRILLAS, WITH FATHER CARNEY

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ACCOMPANYING THEM, REPORTEDLY SPLIT UP INTO 4 GROUPS AND PROCEEDED TO ESCAPE THROUGH THE OLANCHO JUNGLE. THE TWO MEN WITH FATHER CARNEY CLAIMED HIS HEALTH HAD DETERIORATED SO BADLY HE COULD NO LONGER CONTINUE THE MARCH. THE LAST THING WE KNOW WITH CERTAINTY IS THAT THE TWO WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM TOLD GLASS HE WAS LEFT IN A HAMMOCK ON THE BANK OF THE RIO PATUCA, PHYSICALLY EXHAUSTED, AND THAT HE LIKELY SUCCUMBED TO EXPOSURE OR STARVATION. A MORE IN-DEPTH VERSION OF THIS WAS RELAYED TO THE FAMILY BY THE AMBASSADOR WHO ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE EMBASSY HAD NO RECORDS ON THIS CASE SINCE THEY WERE ALL SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT YEARS AGO; FOR THIS REASON, IT WAS FORTUITOUS THAT RON GLASS WAS HERE AND ABLE TO BRIEF THE AMBASSADOR FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, HAVING BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR EMBASSY/DAO REPORTING IN JULY - SEPTEMBER 1983 ON THE PRTC GROUP INVESTIGATION AS TO THE STATUS OF FATHER CARNEY. THE GROUP IS IN POSSESSION OF MANY OF THE REPORTS WRITTEN BY THEN ASSISTANT ATTACHE GLASS WHICH THEY OBTAINED THROUGH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROCESS.

6. ALL THREE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY GAVE THEIR APPRECIATION TO THE AMBASSADOR FOR THE EXPLANATION SO

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R 242355Z MAY 95
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DEPT FOR OLLIE P. ANDERSON (ARA/PPCP)
DEPT FOR ALDEN H. IRONS - DRL

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

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VIVIDLY DESCRIBED. HOWEVER, THEY SAID SEVERAL OTHER
VERSIONS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF FATHER CARNEY'S DEATH
WERE TOLD TO THEM BY VARIOUS HONDURANS. JOSEPH CONNOLLY
SAID HE INTERVIEWED 16 MEMBERS OF THE GROUP IN SEPTEMBER
1983 THAT WERE TAKEN PRISONER BY GOVERNMENT FORCES.

7. JOSEPH CONNOLLY ALLEGES THAT FATHER CARNEY WAS

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CAPTURED BY THE HONDURAN MILITARY WITH THE HELP OF THE U.S. NATIONAL GUARD AND ELEMENTS OF THE SOUTHERN MILITARY COMMAND ON SEPTEMBER 4, 1983. THE FAMILY ALLEGES FATHER CARNEY WAS HELD AND TORTURED AT CIA/CONTRA BASE AT EL AGUACATE, HONDURAS DURING THE PERIOD OF SEPTEMBER 4-16, 1983 (SUPPOSEDLY THIS BASE WAS STAFFED WITH SOME CIA AND PENTAGON PEOPLE WORKING WITH THE CONTRAS).

8. ON SEPTEMBER 16, 1983, ACCORDING TO ONE OF THE FAMILY'S SOURCES, HE WAS ALLEGEDLY EXECUTED BY BEING THROWN FROM A HELICOPTER PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. THE BASIS FOR THIS SCENARIO IS AN INTERVIEW SUPPOSEDLY CONDUCTED BY THE CONNOLLY FAMILY OF THREE FORMER HONDURAN MILITARY OFFICERS WHO REPORTEDLY STATED THAT FATHER CARNEY WAS CAPTURED ALIVE, WAS TORTURED AND THEN TAKEN ALIVE TO THE MOUNTAINS TO BE DROPPED FROM A HELICOPTER. THEY ALSO POINT TO HONDURAN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND THREE

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INVESTIGATIVE FILMS BY THE BBC AS CORROBORATING THIS
VERSION OF CARNEY'S DEATH.

9. THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM STATED THAT IT WAS NOT LIKELY THAT THE HONDURANS WOULD

USE A HELICOPTER IN AN EXECUTION. THIS HAD OCCURRED IN ARGENTINA BUT WAS NOT USED IN HONDURAS AS FAR AS WE KNOW. MORE LIKELY, IF HE HAD BEEN KILLED THE BODY WOULD HAVE BEEN BURIED IN SOME CLANDESTINE CEMETERY WHERE IT COULD NOT BE FOUND. THE AMBASSADOR FURTHER STATED THAT HE HAD SEEN NO EVIDENCE, NOR DID HE BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES MILITARY AND CIA INVOLVED THEMSELVES IN TORTURE OR THE KILLING OF FATHER CARNEY. REGARDLESS OF THE MERITS OF THE AMBASSADOR'S ARGUMENT, MR. CONNOLLY CONTINUED TO VOICE HIS BELIEF THAT THE CIA AND U.S. MILITARY WERE INVOLVED. MR. CONNOLLY SAID THE LEAVING OF FATHER CARNEY IN THE JUNGLE BECAUSE OF HIS WEAKENED CONDITION WAS PLAUSIBLE AND THEY HAD HEARD THAT VERSION BEFORE BUT DID NOT BELIEVE THAT IS HOW HE DIED.

10. THE GROUP SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ONE OF THEIR SOURCES CLAIMS TO HAVE SEEN FATHER CARNEY IN CAPTIVITY IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER 1983 WITH HIS HANDS TIED BEHIND HIS BACK. THEY SAID ANOTHER SOURCE CLAIMS TO HAVE HEARD A MILITARY RADIO TRANSMISSION DESCRIBING THE CAPTURE OF FATHER CARNEY. IN ANOTHER CASE, THEY ALLEGE THAT A SOLDIER (THEY WOULD NOT DIVULGE HIS NAME) SIGNED A DECLARATION THAT FATHER CARNEY WAS CAPTURED. ALL THREE CONTINUED TO PUSH THEIR CONSPIRACY THEORY BY STATING THAT THE CIA DID NOT WANT CARNEY TO PUBLISH A BOOK HE HAD WRITTEN ON HIS EXPERIENCES IN HONDURAS BECAUSE THERE WERE

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NAMES IN HIS WRITINGS THAT COULD GET PEOPLE KILLED. FOR
THIS REASON, THEY ALLEGE THAT THE CIA TRACKED FATHER
CARNEY AND, IN CONSPIRACY WITH THE HONDURAN MILITARY,
BROUGHT ABOUT HIS DEATH. THE BOOK, "TO BE A
REVOLUTIONARY", WAS LATER PUBLISHED.

11. TO ASSIST THEM IN THEIR INVESTIGATION, THEY REQUESTED
THAT THE EMBASSY OBTAIN FROM THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT A
COPY OF THE INTERROGATION OF FATHER CARNEY THEY SAID WAS
CARRIED OUT IN THE CIA/CONTRA BASE AT AGUACATE AND FATHER
CARNEY'S DIARY WHICH THEY NEVER RECEIVED WHEN THEY WERE
GIVEN HIS VESTMENTS AND OTHER PERSONAL EFFECTS. THEY ALSO
REQUESTED THE LOCATION OF COLONEL GERALD CLARK, THE ARMY
ATTACHE IN HONDURAS AT THAT TIME WHO ASSISTED IN
ATTEMPTING TO LOCATE FATHER CARNEY'S BODY.

12. THE AMBASSADOR READILY AGREED TO ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN
THE DIARY AND THE LOCATION OF FATHER CARNEY'S BODY, IF
POSSIBLE. HE RECOMMENDED, HOWEVER, THAT THEY NOT REQUEST
A COPY OF AN INTERROGATION REPORT WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT
EXIST, AT THIS TIME SINCE IT MAY CAUSE DIFFICULTIES IN
OBTAINING OTHER DATA NECESSARY TO THEIR INVESTIGATION.

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AFTER BEING ABANDONED IN THE JUNGLE BY HIS HONDURAN
COMPANIONS.

THE FAMILY UNANIMOUSLY AGREED WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND WILL
HOLD OFF ON THAT REQUEST UNTIL A LATER DATE. WE ALSO
LEARNED AND CONVEYED TO THE FAMILY THAT COLONEL GERALD
CLARK HAD BEEN KILLED IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT IN PANAMA IN 1986.

13. IN THE MEANTIME, THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM SUGGESTED
THEY TAKE OUT ADS IN THE NEWSPAPERS, OFFERING A REWARD FOR
ANY INFORMATION LEADING TO THE DISCOVERY OF FATHER
CARNEY'S BODY. IT WAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THEY GO TO THE
OLANCHO REGION WHERE HE WAS LAST SEEN AND TALK WITH THE
PEOPLE THERE IN HOPES OF LEARNING SOMETHING ABOUT FATHER

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CARNEY AND WHERE HE MIGHT BE BURIED. THEY AGREED THIS WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA BUT STATED THEY HAD NEITHER THE TIME NOR FINANCES FOR SUCH A PROJECT.

14. SINCE RON GLASS WAS AVAILABLE, THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THE FAMILY MEET WITH HIM AND HEAR FROM SOMEONE WHO WAS PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE INVESTIGATION. HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER MEL TURNER ACCOMPANIED THE FAMILY TO THE MEETING. ESSENTIALLY, RON GLASS REPEATED WHAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD TOLD THEM EARLIER, THAT HE WAS SENT TO A PLACE CALLED NUEVO PALESTINA TO INVESTIGATE THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FATHER CARNEY AND INTERVIEW DESERTERS FROM THE HONDURAN INSURGENCY GROUP. THIS IS WHERE HE WAS

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TOLD BY TWO PRTC GUERRILLAS WHO PURPORTED TO BE THE LAST TO SEE FATHER CARNEY, THAT FATHER CARNEY WAS LEFT IN A HAMMOCK AND ABANDONED IN THE JUNGLE ON THE SOUTHEAST BANK OF THE RIO PATUCA BY HIS GUERRILLA COMPANIONS, AND THAT HE HAD LIKELY DIED FROM PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION AND STARVATION.

15. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING, ALL THREE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY EXPRESSED THEIR GRATITUDE TO RON GLASS FOR HIS PERSONAL INTEREST IN THEIR QUEST TO FIND THE TRUTH ABOUT HOW FATHER CARNEY HAD DIED. THEY WERE ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEY HAD SPOKEN WITH SOMEONE WHO WAS IN HONDURAS AT THAT TIME AND SOMEONE WHO WAS BEING HONEST WITH THEM. ALTHOUGH THEY CONTINUED TO FAVOR THE VERSION THAT THE CIA WAS INVOLVED, THEY ADMITTED THAT AFTER HEARING RON GLASS, IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT FATHER CARNEY MAY HAVE DIED AS BOTH HE AND THE AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED. THE MEETING WAS VERY CORDIAL AND ENDED ON A HIGH NOTE WITH THE FAMILY STATING THAT THEY BELIEVE THE EMBASSY CARES AND, UNLIKE IN THE PAST WILL ASSIST.

16. FOLLOWING THE MEETING, EMBOFF SPOKE WITH DR. LEO VALLADARES, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER, AND WAS TOLD THAT FATHER CARNEY WAS ON THE LIST OF THE 184 DISAPPEARED PERSONS GIVEN TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE FOR INVESTIGATION. THE FAMILY WAS ELATED AND HAD HOPES THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL LOOK INTO FATHER CARNEY'S CASE SOON. WE HAVE SCHEDULED A MEETING WITH THE CHIEF OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SECTION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE FOR MAY 24 AND WILL REQUEST THAT FATHER CARNEY'S CASE BE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY. IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE BEGUN REQUESTING INFORMATION ON FATHER CARNEY FROM THE MILITARY. WE ARE

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ALSO TALKING WITH LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS AND REQUESTING
THAT THEY USE THEIR GOOD OFFICES AND SOURCES TO ASSIST IN
LOCATING FATHER CARNEY'S BODY, IF POSSIBLE.

17. COMMENT: WHEN EMBOFF FIRST MET THE THREE FAMILY
MEMBERS, IT WAS OBVIOUS THEY WERE APPREHENSIVE, DEFENSIVE
AND SOMEWHAT HOSTILE TOWARD THE EMBASSY. IN DISCUSSIONS
BEFORE MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR, PATRICK AND EILEEN
SAID THEY HAD BEEN TO HONDURAS A NUMBER OF TIMES SINCE
THEIR BROTHER'S DISAPPEARANCE AND HAD ALWAYS FELT AS
THOUGH THEY WERE BEING TREATED AS OUTSIDERS AND
ANTAGONISTS WHO WOULD NOT LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.

18. IT HAD BEEN SEVERAL YEARS SINCE THEIR LAST VISIT AND
THEY HAD ANTICIPATED A "HARD TIME" AS IN PREVIOUS VISITS.
FORTUNATELY, THEY WENT ON TO SAY, THE ENVIRONMENT IN
HONDURAS HAS DRAMATICALLY CHANGED AND THEY WERE ABLE TO
TALK FREELY TO THEIR SOURCES AND OTHER PEOPLE WITHOUT
EITHER OF THEM FEARING THE MILITARY OR THE GOVERNMENT.
NOW, THEY SAID, THEY ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT THEY CAN GET TO
THE ROOT OF THE CAUSE OF THEIR BROTHER'S DEATH.

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DRAFTER: LAB/POL:MTURNER

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